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# trail of tears

STATE FOREST

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## THE FOREST

Trail of Tears State Forest, formerly Union State Forest, is in Union County about 40 miles northwest of Cairo and near the Mississippi River. The forest serves to preserve and protect the native tree species of Illinois and is dedicated to the proper management of a forest environment.

**Terrain:** Trail of Tears lies within the beautiful Shawnee Hill country of southern Illinois. Generally, the terrain presents a very rugged appearance with long, narrow ridges approximately 150 to 200 feet in height, falling away sharply on either side. The slopes are steep and the valleys between them are narrow. Secondary valleys, ranging from the bottoms of the slopes to within a few feet of the tops, break the continuity of the main slopes. The topsoil is stable with little washing except in the bottoms of some of the ravines.

## HISTORY

**Cherokee Indians:** Between mid-December 1838, and early March 1839, 10,000 Cherokee Indians were forced to move 800 miles from the Great Smokies area to a reservation in present-day Oklahoma. The exiled Cherokees had to stop in southern Illinois just south of what is now Trail of Tears State Forest because of floating ice in the Mississippi River.

Make-shift camps provided poor shelter against the unusually severe winter weather and many people died, thus giving the area the name "Trail of Tears."

**Purchased by the State:** Trail of Tears State Forest was originally known as the Turkey Farm. It was consolidated into the Kohn-Jackson forest and was purchased by the Department of Conservation in 1929. At that time the forest (then named Union State Forest) contained 3,228 acres and has since been increased to ~~3,228~~ acres.

## TIMBER MANAGEMENT

Approximately 60 acres are devoted to the operations of the Union State Tree Nursery and public picnic grounds. The latest methods of continuous forest inventory, using permanent plots and computerized cards, are used in keeping accurate records on such items as volume, growth and species.

Nearly all species of trees in southern Illinois are found at Trail of Tears. A small percentage of the forest has been planted to the non-native shortleaf, loblolly and white pine. These pine plantings are being taken over by invading native hardwoods. Some areas along the country blacktop road will be managed to perpetuate the pine.

The forest is protected from fires by constant patrols and, during dry weather, aerial detection and radio communications furnish rapid notification of any fire. The fire trails serve as quick access roads to all parts of the forest.

The forest also demonstrates proper management to landowners with similar land.

## FACILITIES

**Picnicking:** One main picnic area has tables and park stoves. Five shelter houses are also provided, each containing a fireplace. Drinking water is available at various places near the picnic area.

**Trails:** The network of fire trails is excellent for hiking and horseback riding. There are approximately 44 trails totaling more than 36 miles.

**Hunting:** Squirrels are the most popular game. Deer, ~~coyotes~~, and ~~skunks~~ are present but not plentiful. racoon

Tent Camping - \$ 2.00 per night

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

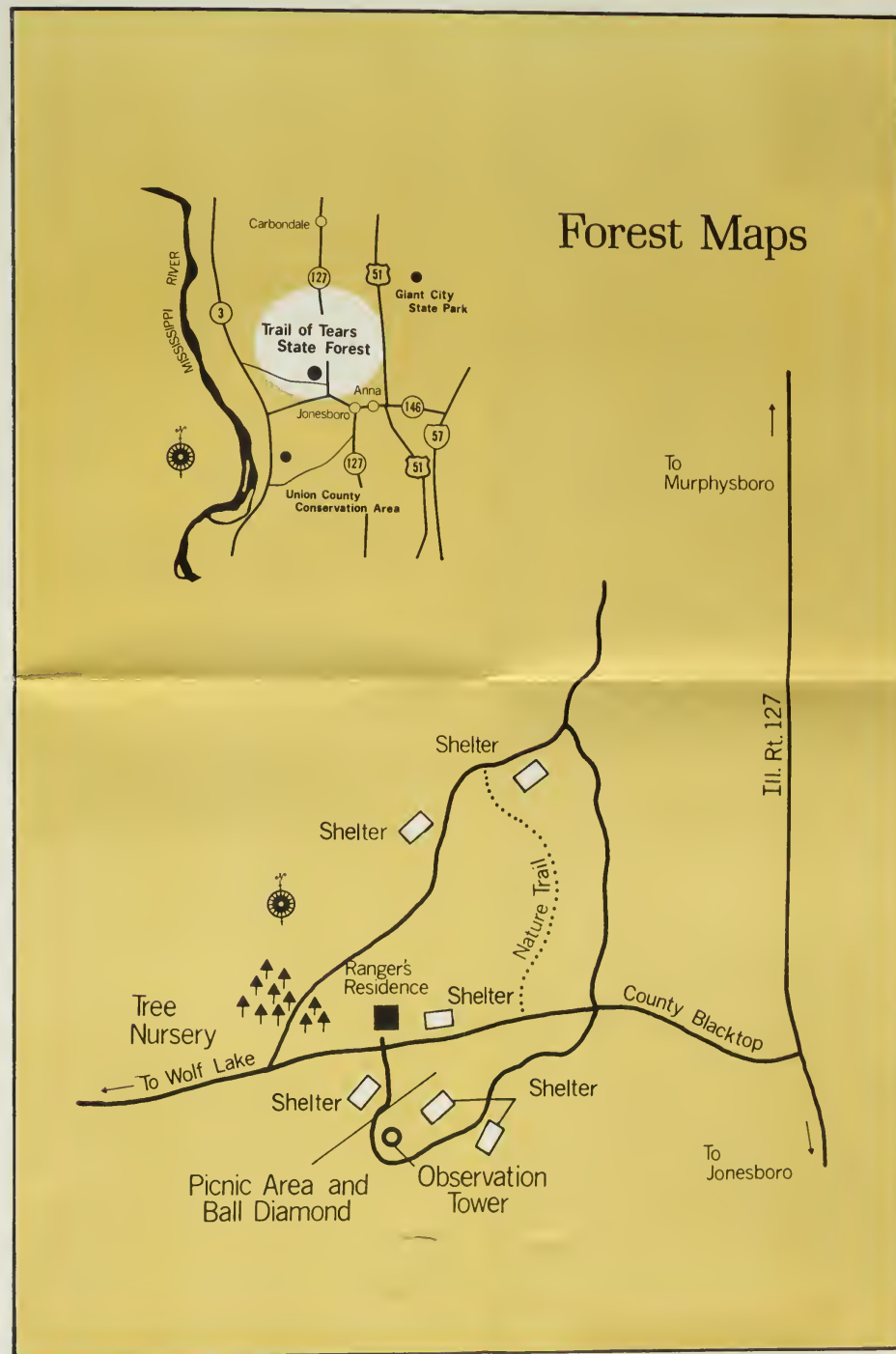
Other state forests include Big River in western Illinois and Hidden Springs and Sand Ridge, both in central Illinois.

For further information concerning Illinois State Forests write to the Department of Conservation, Division of Forestry, Room 611, State Office Building, Springfield, Illinois 62706.



Gathering Seedlings.





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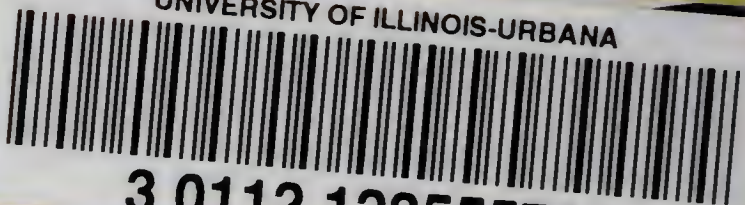
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